

Today in World Affairs

Why Soviets Will Never Stop A-Tests — Even Under Pact

By David Lawrence

WASHINGTON

Millions of words have been written and countless hours of conversation have gone on during the last five years between the diplomatic representatives of the U. S. and the Soviet Union about a treaty to ban nuclear tests. But not until a few days ago was it made crystal clear why the Russians will never stop nuclear testing, whether secretly or otherwise.

For the simple truth is that the Soviets know authoritatively they are behind the U. S. They will never rest until they catch up and even pass this country in nuclear science.

The U. S. government says openly now that the Soviets are second in the nuclear race. Just why American officials make such statements is a mystery, for it would seem that this is the very kind of news the Pentagon should keep within the bounds of managed secrecy. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, in testimony before a Senate committee which has just been released, says:

"... I believe that it is fairly generally recognized among the technical groups that we were much further ahead of the Soviets in the past than we are today, and that by testing they have overcome to some degree our lead. This is, I think, what you might expect from tests. And in particular, I think that is true of their last series, and I perhaps should say the last 18 months rather than the last year when I made the statement I do."

Differential Narrows

"We are weaker today than we were 18 months ago because each of us tested in the atmosphere in the interim period, and because the Soviets had so much more to learn than we did. They did learn that during the period, and therefore this differential of U. S. superiority has narrowed as a result of tests of the Soviets, and this narrows in the atmosphere in the last 18 months."

Sen. Henry M. Jackson, Democrat, of the State of Washington, at one point during his testimony commented that "it did make the Russian of a unilateral test ban" and "if we had exercised it, it would have been a real trouble."

During the last 18 months, the U. S. has indicated a willingness to cut down to

of "on site" inspections, as a means of inducing the Soviets to agree to a treaty. It seems to be assumed that a test ban at any price is better than no test ban. But here a staunch Democrat, Sen. Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut, who has made a special study of the whole problem, points out that the Russians cannot be trusted to adhere to any treaty. He said in a speech to the Senate recently:

"As early as 1961 we were willing to sign a treaty banning tests in space, despite the opinion of competent scientists that such tests could be conducted without serious possibility of detection. . . ."

Risk to Security

"In our proposal of Aug. 27, 1962, we have agreed in advance that, on the day a treaty is signed, tests of all sizes, in all media, whether detectable or not, would be forbidden. Needless to say, we would honor such an agreement—but would the Soviets?"

Sen. Dodd said that he could

not understand how any Administration could risk our security as a nation on the chance that "a government which has violated more than a thousand treaties and agreements over the past 40 years could for some strange reason decide to honor an agreement whose violation would go both unproven and unpunished."

The Connecticut Senator put his finger on the real barrier to any test ban or any other treaty between the Soviet Union and the U. S. when he said:

"The quest for disarmament is essentially based on mutual confidence. Such confidence cannot exist as long as a significant portion of the world is governed by so-called societies—no matter how we must ask ourselves

what the Communists are hiding, what evil intention may be concealed behind their wall of secrecy."

Now more than ever it becomes apparent that the dictatorship in Moscow will cheat and conceal and do everything it can to catch up with and pass the U. S. in experimentation with nuclear weapons. To sum up: The Soviets know they are behind and the American government officially concedes that this is true. No dictatorship in its right senses would ever agree to a nuclear test ban, and similarly no democracy can afford to make such a treaty as long as mutual confidence is lacking.

© 1963 N. Y. Herald Tribune Inc.